DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 190 030 HE 013 024

AUTHOR	Suelzle, Marijean: Bradley, Laura
TITLE	Blacks and Women in Universities: Structural Barriers and Social Realities.
SPONS AGENCY	Northwestern Univ., Evanston, Ill. Office of Research and Sponsored Programs.
PUB DATE	Sep 78
NOTE	30p.: Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society for the Study of Social Problems (San Francisco, CA, September 2, 1978).
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Achievement: *Black Students: Careers: *College Students: Comparative Analysis: Educational Benefits: Expectation: Family Life: *Females: Fraternities: Higher Education: Males: Private Colleges: *Role Perception: *Self Esteem: Sex Differences: Sex Role: *Socialization: Sororities: Stereotypes: Student Educational Objectives: White Students
IDENTIFIERS	*Northwestern University IL

ABSTRACT

Data are reported from a mail survey of a stratified sample of white and black undergraduate students at Northwestern University during winter 1977. The study deals with three areas in which socialization through education could be expected to differ by race and sex: self-esteem, academic involvement, and expectations about family and career. Two features of the university that operate to sort students in general, academically, and socially, are introduced to examine their effects in each of these three areas. The two features are grade point average and sorority or fraternity membership. A majority of the students perceive themselves as above average in self-esteem, a perception not altered by grade point average but correlating positively with sorority/fraternity membership. Blacks are less academically involved than whites, although race and sex differences are insignificant among high achievers. Females are more committed to careers for themselves than males expect for their wives. Higher academic performance increases commitment to a continuous career pattern for women among all groups but black males. Black males who perform well academically may perceive themselves as maintaining a middle class lifestyle on a single income. Among whites, independents endorse a more egalitarian career and family life style than do sorority/fraternity members. (Author/MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED190030

BLACKS AND WOMEN IN UNIVERSITIES:

STRUCTURAL BARRIERS AND SOCIAL REALITIES

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Marijean Suelzle

Laura Bradley

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Marijean Suelzle

Department of Sociology
Northwestern University
Evanston, Illinois 60201

and

Laura Bradley

Department of Sociology
and Institute for Social Research
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48108

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

HE 013 024

Paper presented at The Society for the Study of Social Problems Annual Meeting, San Francisco, California, September 2, 1978. The research reported was supported by a grant from the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at Northwestern University. Data was collected during the Winter, 1977.

AUG 2 5 1980

BLACKS AND WOMEN IN UNIVERSITIES:

STRUCTURAL BARRIERS AND SOCIAL REALITIES

Abstract

Formal education is a sorting mechanism containing structural elements which reinforce the impact of the socialization process whereby blacks and whites, males and females, are taught the stereotypes of our culture. Data is reported from a mail survey questionnaire of a stratified sample of white and black undergraduate students enrolled at Northwestern University, Illinois, during Winter 1977. The study deals with three areas in which the impact of the socialization process could be expected to differ by race and sex -- self-esteem, academic involvement, and expectations regarding family and career. Two structural features of the university which operate to sort students in general, academically (grade point average) and socially (Greek membership) are introduced to examine their effects in each of the three areas.

A majority in all four groups perceive themselves as above average in terms of self-esteem, a perception not altered by grade point average, but with Greeks having a higher proportion positive than Independents. Blacks are less academically involved than whites, although the race-sex differences are insignificant among the higher academic performers. Females are more committed to careers for themselves than males expect for their wives, with the dividing line being marriage for whites, but the presence of young children creating the difference for blacks. Higher academic performance increases commitment to a continuous career pattern for women among black and white females, as well as white males, with the opposite for black males. Black males who perform well academically may perceive themselves as maintaining a middle class life style on a single income. Among whites, Independents endorse a more egalitarian career/family life style than do Greeks.

BLACKS AND WOMEN IN UNIVERSITIES:

STRUCTURAL BARRIERS AND SOCIAL REALITIES

Formal education is a sorting mechanism containing structural elements which reinforce the impact of the socialization process whereby blacks and whites, males and females, are taught the stereotypes of our culture. More specifically, blacks and females get sorted out of the formal education system. At each successive level their proportion decreases (Executive Office of the President: Office of Management and Budget 1973).

The achievement of a basic education and the opportunity for a higher education are two major social concerns. Achieving a basic education implies an ongoing comparison of the relative proportion in each of the race-sex categories as they proceed through the public educational system. More importantly, it implies an examination of the knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired at each stage of the process. As Jencks (1972) has documented the proportion of people finishing elementary and graduate school has increased much faster than the proportion entering or completing higher education. This selectivity may represent a denial of equal opportunity or, more subtly, it may reflect a shaping of students' interests so that some groups -- whites and males — are more likely to enter the next stage of the educational process than are others -- blacks and females. Rosenbaum (1976: 40) describes the actual practice of selectivity within a particular school as a "tournament model" in which those who are successful win only the right to go on to the next stage, whereas those who lose are dropped from the competition. In this model successful completion of one stage does not guarantee success within the next stage, but only the right to

continue competing. Differences in the talents and interests necessary to enter and compete successfully in college may be acquired during earlier stages. To the extent that this carryover occurs, individual development is a continuous process. However, to the extent that individual development is a discrete process, structural elements within a university environment may accentuate or diminish the entry-level differences. It is important to know not only that blacks and women do get sorted out, but also how they get sorted out.

As Daniels (1975: 12) summarized, "little empirical evidence exists about causal relations between characteristics of the college environment and a student's progress, plans, and eventual career choice. Indeed, many studies of college effects conclude that student 'input' (i.e., the characteristics that students bring with them to college) accounts for most of the differences in the 'output' of different colleges and that the college itself may have very little impact." Yet, there is a paucity of systematic information on the responses of students to the institutional structures in a particular university setting. Faculty, students, and administrators alike operate with folk wisdom regarding "student culture" and the "problems of racial and sex-based inequalities."

This study deals with three areas in which the impact of the socialization process could be expected to be different for blacks and whites, males and females -- self-esteem, academic involvement, and expectations regarding family and career. Two salient structural features of the university environment which operate to sort students in general, academically (grade point average) and socially (Greek membership), are then introduced to examine their effects in each of three areas for the four race-sex categories.

Thus the research problem of this study is: How are differences in racial and sex-role statuses, in interaction with self-esteem, academic involvement, and family/career goals, affected by the academic and social structural elements of the university environment.

Research Methods

Undergraduate students at Northwestern University, a privately controlled university in the midwest, were sent a mail questionnaire Undergraduate Life Survey in the Winter of 1977. Data were collected from a stratified systematic sample of the 6404 undergraduate students registered. The sample was stratified to include 150 black students from the 560 registered, and 375 from the remaining 5844 students.

Sample size was derived as a function of cost and number of students in an upper division introductory Sociology research methods class. Funds were available for approximately 500 mailed questionnaires; assigning each of the 21 students responsibility for 25 surveys resulted in the final sample size of 525. The six black students in the class took the responsibility for the black subsample; the remaining 15 students took the responsibility for the nonblack subsample.

Class members were involved in theoretically defining and operationally designing the questionnaire, as well as in all aspects of the data collection process. This approach of involving a relatively large number of students in the design of an instrument to study their own lives resulted in a fairly lengthy, but comprehensive, 40-page questionnaire covering four major substantive areas: quality of student life, career expectations, family expectations, and personal values of students.

The length of the questionnaire was somewhat of a deterrent to a high

response rate, although this was partially offset by an article in the campus newspaper expressing support for the idea of a student-originated study. After personal follow-ups by the students in the Winter Quarter, and a mail follow-up in the Spring, a 66 percent response rate was obtained for the nonblack subsample, and a 51 percent response rate for the black subsample.

Findings

Northwestern's undergraduate student body is cosmopolitan and highly competitive. A 1975 fact sheet issued by the University acts as a rough guide for understanding the nature of the student body. Using the Class of 1978 as illustrative, all but two states are represented and 67 percent of the freshmen are from outside Illinois. Leading states after Illinois are Ohio, New York, Wisconsin, Missouri, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, and Michigan. Of the entering freshmen, 62 percent ranked in the top 9 percent of their high school graduating classes. Their median College Board test scores were 615 in verbal and 640 in math. About 48 percent of the freshmen received scholarship assistance. About 81 percent of the freshmen are from public schools, 13 percent from parochial schools, and 6 percent from private schools.

Our sample, containing students from the Classes of 1977, 1978, 1979 and 1980, reveals racial and sex-role differences which would be disguised by general aggregated averages. Out of a total of 1,821 freshmen enrolled in the Class of 1978, there were 1,045 men and 776 women. Given the relatively smaller enrollment of blacks than whites, this means aggregated averages would tend to be heavily weighted by the performance of white males. Examining the four race-sex categories separately thus avoids inappropirate generalizations

from white males to all college students in general.

Race-Sex Differences at College Entry

The effects of sex and race differences in educational attainment as well as college attendance rates has been thoroughly documented (Alexander and Eckland 1974; Crossland 1971: 74-5). Table 1 compares the race-sex categories with respect to high school and college entrance test performance. Whites outrank blacks on performance reporting better cumulative averages in high school, and higher College Board test scores. Black females report achieving higher cumulative averages than black males in high school although the difference is not great (61 percent versus 56 percent respectively reporting a cumulative average of A- or better). Black males and females perform equally well on the Verbal Scholastic Aptitude Test (S.A.T.), but black males outperform black females on the Mathematics S.A.T. Results are very similar for comparisons between white males and white females, although white males outperform white females by an especially wide margin on the Mathematics S.A.T. examination (73 versus 33 percent respectively scoring 650 or above on the Math S.A.T.). Fewer students in our sample, approximately one-half, had taken the American College Testing Program (A.C.T.) examinations. Among those who had within each racial group, males tended to outperform females with the differences being statistically significant.

Table 1 About Here

In general, then, we would expect to find whites and males subjectively reporting that they felt they were better prepared to meet the academic

Table 1. Race-Sex Categorical Comparisons of Preparation for Entrance to Northwestern University

OBJECTIVE MEASURES OF PREPARATION	WHITE MALE %	WHITE FEMALE %	BLACK MALE %	BLACK FEMALE %	RAW CHI SQUARE (df=3)	p
Best estimate of cumulative average in high school=A or A-	75	79	56	61	10.12	.02
Math S.A.T. Score= 650 or above	73	33	27	19	55.14	.0001
Verbal S.A.T. Score= 650 or above	40	41	14	14	14.61	.002
PERCEIVED PREPARATION						
Feel that were prepared to meet the academic challenges at N.U.=average or better	59	57	47	46	3.59	.31
100% =	(130)	(115)	(32)	(44)*		

*Actual N's fluctuate slightly due to missing data on the measures of preparation.

challenges of Northwestern. The prediction has more support for race than for sex, although the differences are not as great as the objective differences would have led us to predict, and are in fact not statistically significant. About half of the students in each of the four groups felt academically prepared — 59 percent of the white males, 57 percent of the white females, 47 percent of the black males, and 46 percent of the black females. Each of the four groups may employ more within-group than across-group members as salient reference groups (Crossland 1971: 63). Thus, they simply may not perceive the disadvantages that accrue to them as a result of their race and/or sex. At any rate, our findings do not indicate any widespread comparative differential evaluations of their basic secondary education. Considering differences in test performance it may be a false consciousness, but it also indicates the four groups do not attach very different evaluations to the sorting process already evident in the performance measures.

Self-Esteem

Cognitive skills are not the only outcome of the educational process. Noncognitive traits such as personality differences also affect academic and occupational success (Jencks 1972: 131-4). Institutional prestige, acceptance into a highly selective predominantly white university such as Northwestern, has been found to be associated with higher levels of self-esteem (Astin 1977: 40-2). The weight of evidence for children involved in public school education does not support the expectation that self-esteem will be lower amongst groups lower in prestige within the same educational environment (Rosenberg and Simmons 1971). Individuals' positive or negative evaluations of themselves as people therefore would not necessarily

be expected to vary by race or sex within the Northwestern environment. To test this nul hypothesis, a global index of self-esteem was constructed from ratings on three personality traits.

Table 2 About Here

Table 2 examines the relationship. When asked to rate themselves on a 5-point scale from below average to above average on the personality traits of self-esteem, self-confidence and maturity, no systematic differences emerged between the four groups. A majority of students within each of the race-sex groups perceive themselves as above average on all dimensions. Differences on the individual traits or the global self-esteem index were not statistically significant. In terms of evaluating themselves as competent human beings, the students have not been socialized to internalize the differential feedback of the sorting mechanisms. They do, however, recognize the differences when comparisons are specifically made with respect to intelligence. Of the white males, 76 percent perceive themselves as above average intellectually compared to most of their classmates, versus 64 percent of the white females, 54 percent of the black females and 41 percent of the black males. It appears that while differences are perceived accurately they are not necessarily generalized in terms of self-esteem. Black and women students may be preparing themselves to value other adult roles while internalizing the limitations set for them within a highly competitive academic environment.

Academic Involvement

Black male and female students at Northwestern have lower grade point

Table 2. Race-Sex Categorical Comparisons of Self-Esteem

	WHITE MALE %	WHITE FEMALE %	BLACK MALE %	BLACK FEMALE %	RAW CHI SQUARE (df=3)	p
Self-Esteem Index = positive (Rating of 12-15)	54	46	59	50	2.45	.48
Compared to most of your classmates, about how able would you say you are intellectually? = above average	76	64	41	54	15.47	.002
100% =	(130)	(115)	(32)	(44)*		

*Actual N's fluctuate slightly due to missing data on the different measures of self-esteem.

averages than do their white counterparts (see Table 3). Whether this is due to overt discrimination or to a more subtle cooling-out process is open to question since being black has also been found to be a negative predictor of academic involvement (Astin 1977: 87-8). If blacks are socialized to withdraw from the competition at a particular stage of the educational process, then denial of equal opportunity may not be necessary to restrict competition at the next stage. Differential academic involvement was examined by constructing a global index based on responses to four Likert-type items:

1. How often would you say that you are bored in class?
2. How often would you say that you are absorbed in the class discussion or lecture?
3. There is much satisfaction in studying.
4. Compared with most of your classmates here at N.U., how much would you say you have studied during the present term?

Table 3 About Here

Black males and females are less academically involved (with 31 and 34 percent being involved) than are white males and females (with 53 and 50 percent being involved respectively). Blacks are more often bored and less often absorbed in their classes, find less satisfaction in studying, and perceive themselves as studying less than do whites. These subjective attitudinal differences are carried over into actual behavior with blacks spending less hours a week on academic work than do whites. Black males and females closely resemble each other on these dimensions of academic involvement, as do white males and females. With a cross-sectional study

Table 3. Race-Sex Categorical Comparisons of Academic Performance and Involvement at Northwestern University.

	WHITE MALE %	WHITE FEMALE %	BLACK MALE %	BLACK FEMALE %	RAW CHI SQUARE (df=3)	p
Cumulative Grade Point Average at Northwestern= B or Higher	77	78	29	39	47.94	.0001
Academic Involvement Index = involved (rating of 13-20)	53	50	31	34	8.58	.04
On the average, number of hours a week spent on academic work-going to classes, studying and doing work for courses = 30 hours or more	76	76	57	64	7.12	.07
100% =	(130)	(115)	(32)	(44)*		

*Actual N's fluctuate slightly due to missing data on the academic performance and involvement measures.

one cannot say whether perceiving oneself as less intelligent provides less incentive toward academic involvement and performance or vice versa. However, it is clear that the interaction between intellectual self-evaluation and academic pursuits at the university level act as a strong sorting mechanism to relegate blacks to second place in terms of academic competition.

Since females so closely resemble their same-race male counterparts, the data suggest more is involved than internalization of feedback regarding intellectual and academic competence. By that criteria we would have predicted white males to have shown distinctively higher academic involvement than the other three groups. Also, staffing patterns and course content are both racist and sexist at the university level as is the labor force these students are preparing to enter. To considerations of educational and occupational mobility wherein both blacks and women could be considered at a disadvantage, it appears future family expectations must also be taken into account to explain similarities between males and females within each racial group.

Family and Career

Differences in family and career expectations may lead females and males to value a university education in terms of different goals. There is a strong consensus among college students that the goal of combining marriage, family, and career is desirable through the sharing of traditional roles and creation of egalitarian situations (Cummings 1977: 68). Orientation to egalitarian sex role values was examined by constructing an egalitarianism index based on responses to four Likert-type items. Arranged in order of proportion of students expressing egalitarian attitudes they are:

1. A married woman should not attach much importance to a career (highest proportion of egalitarian responses).
2. A woman should devote almost all her time to her family.
3. A woman should be concerned primarily with her family and her home.
4. When a woman marries, it is her duty to follow her husband if he is transferred (lowest proportion of egalitarian responses).

Females are more likely than males to hold egalitarian attitudes on each of these four items, a difference which is reflected in the global index (see Table 4). However, near unanimity on the importance of a career for a married woman (95 and 96 percent of white and black women; 81 and 84 percent of white and black men respectively) does not hold concerning the duty of a married woman to follow her husband if he is transferred (56 and 67 percent of white and black women disagree; compared to only 22 and 19 percent of white and black men respectively). Males and females appear to have very different expectations regarding the actual implementation of an egalitarian ideology in a situation when the ability to compromise traditional sex roles is restricted.

Despite their more egalitarian beliefs, women are more constrained by their sex role when they attempt to balance marriage and career (Feldman 1974). Expectations regarding implementation of egalitarianism were further examined from a developmental perspective on various career and family situations. Students were asked: "If your life works out pretty much as you expect it to, do you <u>realistically</u> expect to have a career or not? (Men should answer in terms of what they expect for their <u>wife</u>, not themselves)".

Table 4 About Here

Structurally, the four groups project similar expectations for marriage and family involvement, with approximately one-third expecting to be married within the next five years, rising to two-thirds who expect to both be married and have children within the next ten years. The life-styles projected by the four groups differ however in terms of how they perceive themselves as handling family and career demands. Females are more committed to careers for themselves than males expect for their wives, but there are race differences as well. For whites, it is marriage itself which is the dividing line. After marriage only 79 percent of the white males expect their wives to have full-time paid careers whereas 96 percent of the white females expect to do so themselves. Black males and females are similar to the white females in projecting a dual-career pattern at this stage. It is the presence of young children that creates the dividing line for blacks with only 34 percent of black males expecting their wives to continue their full-time paid careers compared to 44 percent of black females who predict this pattern for themselves. At this stage the expectations of white males and females become similar again with 13 and 12 percent respectively predicting a dual-career pattern while having children under 5. This is the single instance in which race is a more salient factor than sex for these comparisons. Our findings indicate that the egalitarian goal of combining career and family is tempered by traditional life-cycle expectations concerning the care of young children as well as by race-sex category.

Table 4. Race-Sex Categorical Comparisons of Attitudes and Expectations with Respect to Career and Family

	WHITE MALE %	WHITE FEMALE %	BLACK MALE %	BLACK FEMALE %	RAW CHI SQUARE (df=3)	p
Marital Status Expected:						
1) in 5 years=married (with children or childless)	33	35	43	26	2.56	.46
2) in 10 years=married with one or more children	64	66	81	60	3.38	.34
Family Pattern Expected: = Full-time paid career (for self or wife)						
1) Before you have children	79	96	94	93	17.85	.0005
2) While you have children under 5 years old	13	12	34	44	28.60	.0001
Egalitarianism Index = Egalitarian (Rating of 15-20)	38	73	50	70	35.45	.0001
100% =	(130)	(115)	(32)	(44)*		

*Actual N's fluctuate slightly due to missing data on the career and family measures.

Grade Point Average as a Sorting Mechanism

Clearly the relationships between race-sex category and self-esteem, academic involvement, and family-career expectations are quite complex. Since competitive testing is a major sorting mechanism employed by the university the grade point average communicated to the student would be expected to affect current attitudes and behaviors as well as future plans. Each of the relationships was therefore examined with the structural effect of grade point average controlled (See Table 5).

Table 5 About Here

Grade point average has no significant effect upon self-esteem. All four groups retain markedly similar images of themselves as competent human beings regardless of feedback on test performance standards. Crossland (1971: 73) suggests that for students in the minority, simply maintaining enrollment may in and of itself be viewed as a considerable achievement and source of self-esteem. Grade point average may have a differential meaning and impact among race-sex groups.

Grade point average does serve to specify the relationship for perceived comparative performance, academic involvement, and dual career pattern before children. The original relationship between perceiving oneself comparatively as "above average" and race-sex category (Table 2) disappears amongst students with lower performance (GPA less than "B"); blacks who are performing better (GPA "B" or higher) remain less likely than whites to perceive this to be the case. Blacks who are performing better are, however, more academically involved. It is among the higher

Table 5. Race-Sex Categorical Comparisons of Self-Esteem, Academic Involvement, and Egalitarianism, Controlling for Grade Point Average at Northwestern University.

	GRADE POINT AVERAGE*	WHITE MALE %	WHITE FEMALE %	BLACK MALE %	BLACK FEMALE %	RAW CHI SQUARE (df=3)	p
% "positive" on self-esteem index	Low	50	40	59	56	2.02	.57
	High	56	49	56	41	1.68	.64
% perceiving selves "above average" compared to classmates:	Low	43	28	40	48	2.38	.50
	High	85	75	50	65	8.08	.04
% "involved" on academic involvement index:	Low	37	48	14	30	6.62	.08
	High	59	50	78	41	4.57	.21
% projecting full-time paid career (for self or wife) before having children	Low	74	92	96	88	5.98	.11
	High	81	96	88	100	13.12	.004
% projecting full-time paid career (for self or wife) while having children under 5	Low	0	8	43	35	19.58	.0002
	High	17	12	14	60	20.54	.0001
% "favoring equality" on egalitarianism index	Low	20	72	46	67	18.82	.0003
	High	43	75	56	76	21.49	.0001
100% =	Low	(30)	(25)	(22)	(27)		
	High	(99)	(88)	(9)	(17)**		

* Grade Point Average: Low = Less than B, High = B or higher
** Actual N's fluctuate slightly due to missing data on individual measures.

performers that the original relationship for academic involvement and race-sex category (Table 3) disappears. Positive feedback from competitive testing as communicated by a high grade point average does reduce behavioral racial differences as measured by academic involvement; it does not reduce them with respect to perceiving oneself as doing as comparatively well as is in fact the case.

The findings concerning egalitarian family patterns are quite interesting as well. Achieving a higher level of academic performance increases both black and white females' commitment to a continuous career pattern and an egalitarian marital relationship, and the same pattern holds for white males. The pattern for black males is more complex. Like the other three groups, black males who achieve a higher level of academic performance are more likely to favor an egalitarian marital relationship. Unlike the other three groups, they are less likely to project a dual career pattern either after marriage or when their families include young children. The reversals are accounted for by the responses of black males becoming very similar to those of white males. Perhaps it is when black males perform well academically that they can also perceive themselves as maintaining a middle class life style on a single income. This could explain why they become more traditional whereas the other three groups translate higher academic performance into a willingness to adopt a more egalitarian, inevitably more complex, set of expectations.

White males present a striking contrast. White males with lower academic performance are less likely than any other group to support an egalitarian or dual-career life style. As Komarovsky (1976: 35,51) suggests it is white males who have lost the most by performing poorly academically.

Since they began with the automatic privileges of race and sex, they must personally bear the consequences without the convenient rationale of blaming structural inequality for their relative failure. In this case, adhering to a division of sex roles can at least provide them with one arena for exercising their traditional masculine privileges -- and their favored access to the labor market may provide them with the economic resources to do so, regardless of level of performance.

Greek Membership as a Sorting Mechanism

Institutions of higher education have traditionally operated as an assortative mating process as well as transmitters of knowledge and career skills. This sorting has been facilitated by the Greek system, whose members tend to uphold traditional values (Astin 1977: 43, 87; Almquist and Angrist 1971: 266,276; Friedman 1974: 314). There are fewer opportunities for blacks to enter the Greek system at Northwestern making statistically meaningful race-sex comparisons impossible among Greeks for this sample. Approximately one-third of the white students (32 percent of white males and 36 percent of white females) were members of a Greek letter organization compared to less than one-sixth of the black students (16 percent of black males and 11 percent of black females).

Table 6 About Here

Despite the limitation of sample size, the effects of Greek membership on self-esteem, academic involvement and family/career are substantive interesting and hopefully will provoke further study of the noncognitive sorting mechanisms in higher education. First of all, consistent with

Table 6. Race-Sex Categorical Comparisons of Self-Esteem, Academic Involvement, and Egalitarianism, Controlling for Greek Letter Membership

	GREEK MEMBER-SHIP*	WHITE MALE %	WHITE FEMALE %	BLACK MALE %	BLACK FEMALE %	RAW CHI SQUARE (df=3)	p
% "positive" on self-esteem index	Greek	61	49	80	60	***	
	Independent	50	45	54	49	0.69	.88
% perceiving selves "above average" compared to classmates	Greek	77	55	25	40	***	
	Independent	76	70	41	56	12.51	.006
% "involved" on academic involvement index	Greek	56	54	20	40	***	
	Independent	52	48	31	33	6.39	.09
% projecting full-time paid career (for self or wife) before having children	Greek	76	93	100	100	***	
	Independent	82	97	92	92	9.80	.02
% projecting full-time paid career (for self or wife) while having children under 5	Greek	14	5	40	25	***	
	Independent	12	14	35	46	21.55	.0001
% "favoring equality" on egalitarianism index	Greek	29	68	60	60	***	
	Independent	43	77	46	72	23.01	.0001
100% =	Greek	(41)	(41)	(5)	(5)		
	Independent	(86)	(83)	(26)	(39)**		

* Member of a Greek Letter organization: Yes=Greek, No=Independent
** Actual N's fluctuate slightly due to missing data on individual measures.
*** Black Greek membership too small to meet expected cell frequency assumption of Chi Square statistic.

Astin's findings (1977: 43) Greek membership is associated with increased self-esteem in all four race-sex groups. This is consistent with perceiving oneself as part of the elite campus social structure. Secondly, a heavier social commitment would be expected to detract from perceived academic performance, although not necessarily from academic involvement, and this is what we find. Independent blacks and white females are more likely to perceive themselves as "above average" compared to their classmates, although for white males Greek status has no effect. With respect to academic involvement Greek status does not appear to exert any effect. Thirdly, Independents would be expected to endorse a more egalitarian career/family life style, a prediction which was supported for whites although not for blacks. Whether this reflects genuine differences in black and white Greek systems as socialization agents, or merely random fluctuation in our very small sample size cannot, of course, be determined. It would seem to be a fruitful area for further investigation.

Summary

Analysis of race-sex differences in self-esteem, academic involvement and career/family plans among undergraduate college students at a private university does suggest schools continue to act as sorters throughout the process of higher education. This sorting is accomplished through both the feedback on academic performance and constraining social options through the Greek system.

REFERENCES

Alexander, Karl L. and Bruce K. Eckland

1974 "Sex differences in the educational attainment process." American Sociological Review 39 (October): 668-82.

Almquist, Elizabeth M. and Shirley S. Angrist

1971 "Role model influences on college women's career aspirations." Merrill Palmer Quarterly: 263-279.

Astin, Alexander W.

1977 Four Critical Years: Effects of College on Beliefs, Attitudes, and Knowledge. San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass.

Crossland, Fred E.

1971 Minority Access to College. New York: Schocken.

Cummings, Laurie Davidson

1977 "Value stretch in definitions of career among college women: Horatia Alger as feminist model." Social Problems 25 (October): 65-74.

Daniels, Arlene Kaplan

1975 A Survey of Research Concerns on Women's Issues. Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges.

Executive Office of the President: Office of Management and Budget

1973 Social Indicators: Selected Statistics on Social Conditions and Trends in the United States. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Feldman, Saul D.

1974 Escape From the Doll's House: Women in Graduate and Professional School Education. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Friedman, S. Thomas

1974 "Students' assessment of components of campus life." Journal of College Student Personnel (July): 311-316.

Jencks, Christopher

1972 Inequality: A Reassessment of the Effect of Family and Schooling in America. New York: Harper and Row.

Komarovsky, Mirra

1976 Dilemmas of Masculinity: A Study of College Youth. New York: W.W. Norton.

Rosenbaum, James E.

1976 Making Inequality: The Hidden Curriculum of High School Tracking. New York: John Wiley.

Rosenberg, Morris and Roberta G. Simmons

1971 Black and White Self-Esteem: The Urban School Child. Washington, D.C.: American Sociological Association.